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A NEW RACE OF *GRALLARIA EXCELSA* FROM VENEZUELA

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Recent study of a small collection of birds secured by the W. H. Phelps Expedition of The American Museum of Natural History, at Colonia Tovar, Venezuela, has brought to light a new subspecies of *Grallaria excelsa* which seems worthy of recognition.

I am greatly indebted to Dr. Frank M. Chapman for the opportunity to describe this new form, to Mr. W. E. C. Todd, Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, for the loan of material used in establishing its relationship, and to Mr. John T. Zimmer for his invaluable assistance. It is my privilege to name this bird for Mr. William H. Phelps of Caracas, Venezuela, who financed and actively participated in the collecting and who has been a friend and benefactor of long standing of the Bird Department of The American Museum of Natural History.

Names of colors when capitalized indicate direct comparison with Ridgway's 'Color Standards and Color Nomenclature.'

Grallaria excelsa phelpsi, new subspecies

Type from Colonia Tovar, Estado Aragua, Venezuela, alt. 5900 ft., No. 322,974, American Museum of Natural History; adult male, Nov. 14, 1937, collected by W. H. Phelps Expedition.

DIAGNOSIS.—Similar to *Grallaria excelsa excelsa* Berlepsch of Mérida, Venezuela, but upper surface notably greener; forehead less Orange-Citrine; the Deep Neutral Gray of the nape extending to middle of crown; remiges and rectrices above and below not so warm a brownish olive; white patch on chin and throat less extensive; anterior breast less cinnamomeous, with terminal and subterminal black bars broader, forming a more pronounced crescentic patch; exposed culmen at least 3.5 mm. shorter, tarso-metatarsus at least 4 mm. shorter than in the typical form.

DESCRIPTION OF TYPE.—Upper parts from interscapulars and anterior scapulars to rump and upper tail-coverts dull Olive-Citrine; scattered over this area are a few feathers which are terminally barred with two narrow dusky lines separated by a broader bar of Raw Sienna. Also, on the posterior rump, a few feathers are terminally barred with Light Orange-Yellow; these feathers appear to be juvenile but those on the back are adult. Nape and posterior crown a conspicuous Deep Neutral Gray; a few feathers are terminally and subterminally tinged with buff, several of the latter being faintly barred with black terminally; these appear to be juvenile. Forehead Orange-Citrine; an inconspicuous line over the eye Orange-Buff, terminally barred with black. These feathers appear to be juvenile. Lores, subocular space and base of bill above, light cinnamon-gray; anterior auriculars Raw Sienna,

broadly barred terminally and subterminally with blackish; posterior auriculars dark citrine; malar region a little less warmly colored than the basal auriculars. A narrow central stripe extending from chin to anterior breast dull white, washed with Buff-Yellow; the chin and throat with tips of feathers pronouncedly hair-like, blackish. Breast, flanks and abdomen between Yellow Ocher and Deep Chrome, becoming warmer on the anterior sides of the breast and on the flanks and even richer on the crissum; the feathers of the upper breast have broad black tips which form a crescentic patch across the chest. Immediately behind this patch, the blackish tips become narrower than the subterminal bands, while the sienna tips broaden giving a more regularly barred appearance. These bars become more widely spaced posteriad to the crissum where they are entirely lacking. Lower portion of the crissum, the under tail-coverts and tibio-tarsus are Deep Chrome, the latter being warmer in color and broadly barred subterminally with black. Remiges Dark Mouse Gray except for a light Cinnamon-Buff patch at inner webs of the primaries (seen best from below). The outer margins of the primaries are light brownish olive, decreasing in intensity to a dull citrine at the sixth primary and from then on like the outer margins of the remaining remiges. Upper wing-coverts dull citrine; under wing-coverts Deep Chrome flecked laterally with black; tail dark Umber above, Dresden Brown below. Bill Sooty Black above and horn below (in dried skin); feet Dark Quaker Drab. Wing, 159 mm.; tail, 68.5; exposed culmen, 31; culmen from base, 37.5; tarso-metatarsus, 59.5.

SPECIMENS EXAMINED

Grallaria excelsa excelsa.—VENEZUELA: Guarico, Estado LAra, 2 ♂, 1 ♀; La Cuchilla, Mérida, 2 ♂, 1 ♀ (topotypes).

Grallaria excelsa phelpsi.—VENEZUELA: Colonia Tovar, 1 ♂, (type).

REMARKS.—When *Grallaria excelsa phelpsi* was brought into camp the residents of Colonia Tovar were as fascinated as we were. At least twenty natives viewed it but, with two exceptions, none had seen the bird before. One young man claimed to have killed a *Grallaria* several years previously but had never seen another. The second, Florencio Ruthman, who collected our specimen in a dense belt of forest, stated that, although he had never seen such a bird before, he had imitated its strange whistle and lured it out of the deep forest débris. At our request he imitated the whistle a number of times. It sounded very much like the low vibrant note created by blowing over the neck of an empty bottle.

Becoming quite optimistic about the "new bird" we sent it Air Mail to Dr. F. M. Chapman at the American Museum. His answer, given in part here, confirmed our hopes.

It is apparently *Grallaria excelsa* described by Berlepsch in 1893 from Montaña Aricagua on the south slope of the Mérida Andes. Elevation is not stated but probably in the sub-tropical zone. Your bird being from, I assume, the northern slope of the Caribbean Andes may have come from a more humid region and only direct comparison of specimens would tell us whether the two are separate, but in any

event, I have your bird in my hands, at least the second known specimen of its species

Fortunately, Mr. William H. Phelps discovered that there were six recently collected specimens, from or near the type locality, at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh. It was after comparison with these that the differences recorded above were evident.